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## The Pentagonagram, No. 2

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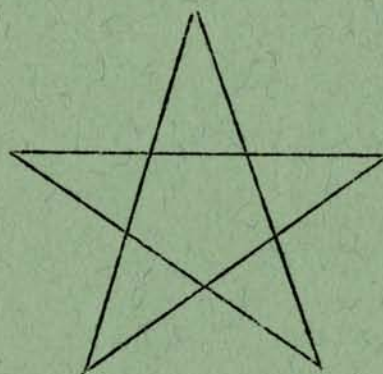
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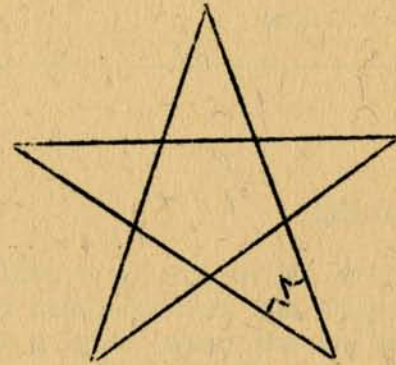


PENTAGRAM

a monthly magazine of poetry, short stories, and essays



With the second issue, the editors wish to thank all those who have contributed to the PENTAGRAM. Student and faculty interest has made this issue possible. Your interest and contributions will make future issues possible. Send your poetry, short stories, and essays to the PENTAGRAM, c/o Jim Harris, 202 Mims, Nacogdoches, Texas.



Bill Armstrong  
Jim R. Harris  
Sonny Hyles  
Gemette McGuire

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Looking Back

## CENTENARY

The live oak stands by crumbling ruins  
Of bricks and weather-eaten boards.  
It smiles and sways keeping watch  
On memories of faded lives.

It spreads protective arms above  
The shadow of a gallant man  
In gray-plumed hat and gleaming sword,  
Who rode away and never returned.

It sighs a sigh in recollection  
Of kisses shared with a faithless wife  
By a seamy, roaming Yankee drummer  
And her shame upon remembering.

A hundred years the oak has seen  
And scores of lives have been lived out  
Beneath its slightly sagging arms.  
It tiredly moans a plea for death.  
Bill Armstrong

## FREEDOM

When death comes calling,  
I will be prepared for him.  
His messenger comes.

An arrow in flight --  
Death is on the wing for me --  
The moon, blood-red, dies.

Death is not darkness,  
But light brought on by dying.  
My light shines tonight.

The bird in the air,  
I am lying in my grave.  
Which of us is free?

I am the free one,  
The "soul," free to play on time's  
Eternal playground.  
Mike McJilton

## A SHORT LYRIC TO SHELLEY

Sea-bound off Italy's coast  
You search for intellectual beauty  
And find immortality.  
Like Prometheus, liver eaten  
By vultures, you smile  
Your childish smile  
And chide them for their madness.  
From ancient pyramids,  
Perched, you sing of Adonais  
And your own oblivion  
Beneath sweet waters  
That hold and caress you  
Like you never were on earth.  
Sonny Hyles

## EULOGY FOR A WRECKED CAR

With roaring, matched-chrome pipes,  
And wicked four-speed shift,  
My four-wheeled steed with bright,  
White eyes and heart of gleaming steel,  
Lay twisted and torn beside the highway.

Torn by a careless master, twisted  
By the Hand-of-Fate: a drunk that  
Ran a red light, because he could not wait.

They took me to the hospital,  
And though I will not die,  
I wish my friend a happy time,  
At the racetrack in the sky.  
Gemette McGuire



Through Mirrors

## LUNCH COUNTER

Dead eyes look  
Through cigarette smoke  
Into menus,  
While calloused hands  
Clutch paper bags full  
Of precious nothings  
From Woolworth's.

Thirsty lips gulp  
Weak coffee,  
As minutes tick by,  
And busses are due.

Housewife destined girls  
Spread typewriter hardened fingers  
Around lipstick stained water glasses,  
Wondering what husbands  
The computer selected for them.

Meaningless, exchangeable bands  
Of gold shine dully  
On tired hands of tired men  
Who worry  
About a tomorrow,  
That is as exchangeable  
For today,  
As wedding rings are  
For freedom.

Suzanne Roberts

## EPISTLE TO H. L. HUNT

Within the confines  
Of sightless walls  
We smoke  
And talk of things we'll do  
In the morning or sometime  
Tomorrow.....  
Faceless men and women  
Speaking of Sophocles  
And  
Waiting.  
Thickening smoke and minds  
Dull senses like too much sex.  
And liquor, tasted too much,  
Leaves film and that flat taste  
That we have grown accustomed to.  
Days running into endless nights  
And  
Never  
Ending.  
We smoke  
And talk  
And listen,  
Sometimes.

Sonny Hyles

## SONG FOR TWO VOICES

I gave you flowers, a year ago  
Yes, and I said, "I love You."  
Happy times then.  
Not like now, when I sit on  
A burnished throne and listen  
To Shakespeare recorded.  
I know! My work.  
Talk to me my pet. You are  
Grown cold. Your love—  
A year ago—  
Ravaging, and hungry with desire,  
Has grown cold.  
I dull and tarnish with boredom.  
I know my dear. We die.

Gemetta McGuire



"Impressions Following A Wedding"

And thus the season: summation of the year.  
And for all the new life, beginning with hands smelling of a dirty hole,  
Sweet sounds that come,  
"My feet hurt"

It's a marriage of old lovers

Caught up in a sea of cake and well-wishers, ready to leave,  
Ready to begin that good life always wanted.

"Hope to be with you tomorrow"

Everyone has gathered, the old gang, the new gang,  
To look each other over for a sign of change.

"He's always been a loser"

"Doing fine thank you"

It's amazing, their all shadows living in the presence  
Of dead ideas about what is "cool"

For God's sake it's time for an omission of words like that.

Who has lingered all year to now to catch up with himself  
When all the while he hasn't gone anywhere?

Prove it by actions last year. Where were you?

You're right, too many reunions.

The eve of the Eve, and all hurry about to see themselves--  
A reflection of themselves--

Move away dear friend, you touch the soul of all the universe  
Without even knowing it--

You while you dance from New Orleans.

Here it is, straight from the cuff;

The janitor lingered back in the wings while the  
Actors of a different theatre moved about on stage

And as he said it was a gathering of contrasts,

With a flavor touching the

International, interrational? internatural? No, innerruption!

God bless you my son.

We are gathered here

In his sight to join those who have already joined.

Home sweet home...how do I look?

Want to hear the music?

No, I have become philosophical and want to walk.

Will you take...?

I have, I, I do, will, yes.

No!

What happened to the organ?

And no sun, with breakfast.

But roads and cold air,

The fires where they burn trees and make all the land a freeway.

Jim R. Harris



## A LITTLE WORLD

He skipped along the crowded sidewalk nimbly avoiding the passing forms of adults. He wove and dived amid them, never once touching even the hems of their dresses or overcoats. Stopping in front of the huge, shiney plate glass window, he saw a little boy looking back at him. Skinny, little sparrow-legs, arms like toothpicks, and a round, distended belly all held together by a pair of giant black eyes returned his gaze. He made a face and was mimed. He showed his white teeth in a great, false grin and it was returned.

The flow of black legs and flapping trouser-cuffs continued past him in the sanctuary of his little island off the sidewalk. He stepped out and was once again caught up in it. Darting easily, he miscalculated and collided with a heavy, dark leg. Looking up five miles he saw the scowling face of a policeman. It was covered with pasty-looking skin the color of a fish's belly, but began to change rapidly to a sunburned white man look. A big white hand reached down at him, but he skipped off with only bull bellows following him.

Some of the legs were white now. A head came forward, on line with his. It was pasty too, but it smiled at him. He grinned back, hopping about it in glee. It hopped back and finally, wistfully left at a stratospheric command. A fuzzy little dog with poppy eyes, on a dangling leash sniffed him. He patted its head and it licked him wetly. The leash jerked and the dog followed it, straining to stay, looking longingly back at him. He turned and headed back to the land of black legs. A frowsy yellow tom cat ran into an alley pursued hotly. It jumped up on a trash can and spit fiercely at him. He backed off and found a pile of newspapers and wrappers that had blown into a niche. Digging around in it he found a shiney piece of tin foil, the only valuable thing in the whole pile. It went into his pocket. With split second timing, he leaped back onto the sidewalk between two pairs of swiftly moving legs and moved in the crowd past the evil-smelling fish market. He stopped and looked into the big, round glazed-over eyes and gaping mouths in fascination. Reaching out he felt the sharp scales and fins. A booming voice drove him back into the moving mass. A broken beer bottle in the gutter gave off reflections like a handful of rubies mixed with the shimmering white of pearly filter tips.

His race stopped suddenly by a big, black hand, which belonged to the voice that scolded:

"What you doin' runnin' like that, boy? You better wake up and watch out. You in the world, not a fairyland!"



## PROPOSAL

What should I wear?  
 I should dress -- sharp --  
 Not too loud -- toned down  
 By thoughts of her.  
 My hair -- short and ragged--  
 Should be combed -- how?  
 I'll use my hands to rumple it,  
 And look like Robert Frost.  
 Should I take my poems  
 And impress her with my artistry?  
     I should never write  
     Another line.  
 Should I take candy and flowers?  
 Is it proper?  
 I've always heard.  
 Should I bend my knees  
 To this goddess of nothing  
 That I adore -- only for her flesh?  
 What should I say?  
 Should I say  
 That I have sat  
 And listened with deaf ears,  
 To trivial conversations  
 Between one-eyed idiots  
 Fondling the thoughts  
 Of harlots  
 Capering between dirty sheets?  
 Or!  
 Should I say  
 That I have sat  
 In dark parks  
 Watching lovers walk --  
 Arm-entwined --  
 And stop to kiss --  
 Running eager hands  
 Over passionate bodies --  
 Then run away  
 Panting lustily?  
     I should cut my throat,  
     But who would care?  
 Should I walk to her house,  
 Or take a cab to impress her?  
 It is only two blocks.  
     My head aches  
 From all my preparations.  
 I will take an aspirin,  
 And lie down for awhile.  
 She will still be there  
 Tomorrow.

Gemette McGuire

## Dearth

## TO THE FATHERS, BEARDED AND GROWN OLD

Soft beds and warm blankets.  
 Security in softness  
 Hard-core pornography  
 And hard-nose philosophy.  
 Case histories in warmth.  
 Some day, when fleecy clouds  
 And spirits  
 Tell us of the how,  
 We will learn.  
 Boxed, labeled, and cataloged  
 We live out life,  
 Sterile.

Sonny Hyles

## SECOND CHANCE

My soul, a shadow,  
 Stalks me until I enter  
 The darkness of my  
 Own disbelief and kill it;  
 Then is reborn by faith's light.

Mike McJilton

## HAIKUS

A coyote howls,  
 A raven screams insanely,  
 And I mourn love's death.  
 But a flake in life's  
 Blizzard, I am blown about  
 Until death melts me.  
 The dew, earth's pearls,  
 Sparkle with a luster born  
 Of love and sadness.

The vulture, slowly  
 Circling, descends to his  
 Meal that death prepared.

Mike McJilton



the PENTAGRAM

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## To A Woodland Pond

The rasping quiet of solitude engulfed my woodland cabin.  
Moombers crouched in silent shadows waiting to slide  
upon me like ivory death.

The lunar magic bore me into the velvet night across  
golden grasses to a moist alter.

There: a pond mirrows the distant moon.

Enchantment brought me to my knees before this oval  
monument to Heaven.

The huge liquid eye stared accusingly upon me.

My eyes rose in search of lost Faith.

"Shame, ye fallen one of Clouded birth."

"Shame, ye dimmer comet of Heaven melted by Earthly passion."

Lost, Forlorn, and Faithless my doubting eyes were cast

from the lofty Blue to the Staring waters.

Suddenly, a wind wrinkled the silvered surface.

"Strange," I thought, "that God should wink at me."

Charles T. Guy

## Mr. Joe Bobb Again: A Rationalization

I am a success! In the last issue of the PENTAGRAM I wrote an emotional  
unlogical few comments about Nacogdoches. The article accomplished its  
purpose: a few students that would never have touched the magazine read  
part of it. The editor of the school paper rose up in arms and wrote  
her best editorial of the year in defense of this college town and the  
local newspaper (where the school paper is printed). Several students  
rushed up to more than one of the editors and expressed opinions  
similar to those in the article--the local newspaper is a poor excuse  
for what it calls itself, the police have been prejudice, and etc. The  
opinions in the article were emotional opinions to be sure. But why  
not? Emotion, well emotion is emotion, is emotion. Which means, of  
course, that it is difficult for this person to really get socially  
or ideologically excited over this town. The article created some  
interest. The PENTAGRAM thanks you for that interest.

Some Day

Joe M. Bobb

(scribbler, scriber, scrubber)

There sings a song eternal  
Of rushing rivers, satin streams,  
Of placid motions -- nature's dream.

The woodlark trills his song of joy,  
Accompanied by the rush of winds,  
The flicker's rhythmic beat attends.

And I stand lonely looking on,  
Knowing the joy of woodland's song  
Is turned corrupt by greedy men.

Bill Armstrong



J.J. and Other Men

## Discourse

The old man limped slowly  
 Down the road  
 Followed by a shaggy-  
 Haired boy.  
 Together,  
 They walked along the road  
 Watching their feet  
 Slap dust-spouts in the sand.  
 'Father! Where's Maw?  
 "She's dead son. Remember  
 "When she died?  
 "Where's she now paw? Heaven?  
 "She's in the ground son,  
 "Covered with moss and dirt.  
 "Will she ever come back paw?  
 "No son. She's gone forever.  
 "I hope I never die paw.  
 "I hope you don't either son.  
 The old man shook his head sadly,  
 And watched the shaggy-haired boy  
 Run ahead throwing rocks at birds.  
 Gemette McGuire

## #22

Yesterday they spoke of rewards  
 And intimately they spoke  
 Of Dedalus, Barnes, and Prufrock.  
 Yesterday we communicated  
 With past souls.  
 Yesterday they spoke of ethics —  
 The good life, a direction —  
 While I drank from a full jug.  
 Yesterday I went home ready to  
 Absorb a sweet few ideas.  
 I lunched with Hamlet,  
 Dined with a sad Lonigan,  
 Drank beer at the Boars Head.  
 Today  
 Well,  
 We have our new critics  
 And new twists on old,  
 Insignificant ideas.  
 Jim Harris

## The 97th Lament for Lever Brothers

Wrappers,  
 Paper and plastic,  
 Yell buy me, buy me.  
 Screaming highway signs  
 And subtle slick pages  
 Coax and plead uniqueness  
 And we buy and sell  
 And lend and lease  
 Entranced with it all.  
 We, ourselves, wrapped,  
 Brooks Brothers special,  
 And sold to the  
 Highest bidder.  
 Constipation glorified  
 By prune pushers  
 Succumbs.  
 The white knight  
 Reigns and stifles  
 Us with crocodile tears  
 And Unbelievable smiles.  
 Sonny Hyles

## L.S.D.

Sucking the sugar cube,  
 I leap into the monster's mouth  
 To see inside myself.  
 Outside, I look upon myself  
 With scorn, to see the mass  
 That shelters me.  
 Seeing and feeling unreality,  
 My hand reaches to touch infinity,  
 But fails.  
 Back inside myself,  
 The White Owl perches on my head,  
 And blesses me.  
 Now that I think clearly;  
 The only real release from life,  
 Is Death.  
 Gemette McGuire



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NOTES FROM A COUNTRY PARSON

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"There are two different relations we can have as individual human beings. We can 'experience' things-- this we do to objects such as rocks and trees. It is largely physical. Or we can have a 'relationship' with persons. Now remember, to experience them is to reduce them to things. But -- to relate oneself with a person is to bind oneself to him in a different way. You see and identify yourself with him. It is somehow to participate in his being. I believe that the essence, the being of a man is Love. I believe that the supreme source of Love is God. The Scripture says: 'God is Love,' and this is what I hold to be true. So -- to participate with a person in Love is to bring God into the relationship. This relationship can only be said to be 'spiritual.' You may not like the word, but there is no other. The word 'mental' is too confining, it restricts itself to your mind, alone -- whereas the word 'spiritual' involves the connotation of a sharing with God, somehow. A sharing of love, perhaps. Yes, that's it exactly, a sharing of Love. Now -- if God is Love and if we can love our fellow men, we are bringing God into our lives as well as theirs. He permeates our whole existence as well as the relationship. Suddenly, in every experience of life, God enters in. Tragic events, disgusting events now have a meaning. God is with us in them. To be sure, we can't know Love, without knowing its negation, which is a lack of it. In the same way, we can't enjoy happiness unless we taste its negation, which is sorrow. We can't appreciate good health, unless we know the burden of ill-health. All these things make sense if God is in our lives. They are bound up in His purposes. Life has no ultimate meaning for us outside of faith in Him, it is only a slow process of daily dying. But if we take what Kierkegaard called the 'leap of faith,' then God makes all the inconsistencies and incongruous situations of life have some meaning for us personally. They are only meaningful to us who are in this relationship with God. We cannot make Him known to anyone else as we know Him, because it isn't Him we know, as a person. We only know Him as we are related to Him and His world. The world is His! It is not basically evil, because it is planned by Him and He created all things good. To turn aside and worship God, Himself -- to draw away from the world, to separate yourself from the world, like a monk, is to undo the plan of God. If we do this we turn Him into a thing and not a being to whom we are related. We become guilty of idolatry. To worship God is to share in Him and to share in His world."

"But how about this experience with God that you speak of?"

"My experience with God has not, nor would it ever be, enough to sustain my life with Him. But -- God used this experience as a revelation of Himself to me, initially. Believe me, I have seen many people who claimed to encounter God, and then saw them drift back to the world of the self. I have even seen men attempt to justify their personal prejudices on the basis of an experience with God. They have limited Him to a transcendent place somewhere away from the world and He never really enters into life here on earth. He has been conveniently filed in a drawer labeled 'heaven.' But for me, as I started to say, my confrontation with the Almighty was only a beginning. The experience as you called it, is not over. It has continued and it will continue forever, I am sure of it. So now I can see God in the world. I can see His face suffering on the Cross, in the tear-filled eyes of a teen-ager who finds herself pregnant. I can see the thorns biting into His head, when I see the sad look of complete submission and the collapse of all

(continued page 10)



## NOTES (cont.)

human dignity brought about in an old Negro by the hand of his white masters. I see the look of pleading mercy directed to His Father when he said: 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me,' -- as I see this look on people being slowly eaten up by a cancer. But in all these things -- the joys and the sorrows of life -- I see a little bit of God. And because His Love is in me, I feel His pain as well as His joy. I suffer right along with the Negro, the cancer-patient, and the pregnant teen-ager. I'm no martyr, but somehow I'm a part of all of them. It really hurts me too, because I have turned from His will and presence, and in so doing, have generated the reverse of Love, which is evil. It is a daily struggle for me to stay away from sin, but each day that I do, I tell myself it's worth it. God, yes, it's worth it! The reason I am a man of God is because there is nothing else on this earth worth the effort -- to me. This is why I can smile when people treat me like a member of some third sex; this is why I can stay happy when men cynically address me as 'Reverend'; for one and only one reason -- God lives in me and gives me the strength to attempt to turn all these things into something to benefit Him and His world, which is also mine."

(from incomplete work)

Bill Armstrong

## THE LOADED CANVAS AND J. HALL

too often had he dreamed of such experience to really believe that she was laying there on the ground her Negro mother rushing about unhurt and afraid for her only child the car didn't look as if it had been in a crash but the boy paid no attention to that his attention was upon the girl it had been there since he first realized what had happened it was her face that he saw nothing else beyond her face there was only blurred movement she was beautiful she was the most beautiful person he had ever seen and he was transfixed as all men are at the sight of their first lover unable to speak unable to do anything except move toward that thing he must love

the scene arose before him a frame in some slow camera to be caught to be frozen in its place his mind and as if from some elysian field the Negro girl a nymphs face projecting forcefully to the audience of his mind tilted her head to one side looking lovely and unhurt and with that frame a cleansing came washing all his soul all his mind and hands making this the time to run as lovers do to her

...if i should jump...he shuffled his feet looked down at the gathering crowd

he had picked her up and started toward a field next to the car when she first looked at him it was a field of grain and her hand hanging at his side touched his leg and the grain although he ran she felt that this white boy took an hour for each step but his arms felt good about her he placed her on the ground to die and she did while smiling at him

...a bigger splash to make upon her door...and a big black god reached out for him

Jim Harris



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